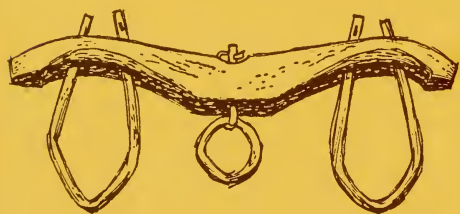


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He Knew Lincoln: Captain
Cummings Recollections.

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He Knew Lincoln

Captain Cummings Recollections

(PART 1)

VOL. 3



5¢
A COPY

THE CAPTAIN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF "HONEST ABE"

*From the time Lincoln came to
Springfield until he left for Washington.*

Part I

SO you boys want to know if I ever knew Abraham Lincoln. Why, I knew Abraham, or "Honest Abe" as all we that knew him always called him,—and who did not know Lincoln for miles around. I remember him from the time he came to Springfield, way back in 1837, until that eventful day came when we sorrowfully laid him away over yonder in Oak Ridge Cemetery. I remember that day well. It was May 4, 1865.

I will never forget that day as long as I live, for it seemed as if the whole world just stopped—sort of hushed like. Lincoln came, God's word upon his lips and with God's mantle about him, he did his allotted task, then vanished, leaving behind a memory, half mortal, and half myth.

Where did I first meet Lincoln? Well, it seems I always knew Abe. You see we grew up together. His law office, where he and Billie H. Herndon practiced for so many years, was just across the street from my store—and morning and evening we got into

the friendly habit of walking back and forth together. You see we lived just around the corner from each other.

Those were interesting days! Everybody felt as if he had a share and a responsibility in running our country. Slavery was a big question. People were divided on the Dred Scott decision and arguing over the Missouri Compromise. Our neighbors in the South were pressing State Rights. I wish everybody today took as much interest in our country's problems as we all did then.

But maybe times are different; it appears to me that the only time people concern themselves about how our country is run is along about election time, and even then they do more complaining than they do voting.

But to go back to when I first met Lincoln. It was in 1836 or 1837, shortly after the Illinois State Legislature in which he was then a member had, under his leadership, selected Springfield as the State Capital in place of Vandalia. Lincoln you know was living at a place called New Salem, a small village about 20 miles north of Springfield. When the State Capital came to Springfield Abe came to live here. He had been admitted to the bar shortly before.

You want to know what Lincoln looked like the first time I ever saw him? Well, I'll tell you.

He had ridden to town on a borrowed horse, with no earthly property save a pair of old, worn-out saddlebags, which con-

tained a few clothes. He came into the store with those saddlebags on his arm and said, "Mr. Cummings, I want to buy the furnishings for a single bed."

I told him that the mattress, blankets, sheets, pillows and other fixings would cost him about \$17.00. He allowed that probably was cheap enough but the real fact was he was unable to pay cash for them—yes sir, Old Abe was outspokenly honest in everything he said or did.

I can remember him standing there leaning against the counter asking me if I would trust him until Christmas when he would pay me if his experiment as a lawyer was a success. Then his face grew sad, and looking at me with those deep-set black eyes of his he said, "If I fail in this attempt I do not know that I can ever pay you." As he spoke, I thought then, as I know now after many, many years, I never saw a sadder face. And when I saw it become more careworn and trouble-marked through the many eventful years to follow, it always made me remember Him of whom 'twas said, "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Did I let him have the bed and mattress? I certainly did, for I knew that here was a man who was just naturally honest, and some day he would do just what he said he would do—pay for it. Abraham Lincoln always did exactly what he said he would do. No wonder everybody trusted him and called him "Honest Abe." I tell you people do not

give a man a name like that unless he earns it, and if ever a man deserved to be called "Honest Abe"—Lincoln was that man.

Every time I look at a picture of Lincoln and see those many trouble-marks on his face, it seems to me I can trace the cause of each one. You see I knew all about many of his troubles from his first love affair with sweet Ann Rutledge, who was just 19 years old when Lincoln met her. Everybody liked Ann. She and Abe were engaged in 1835, but fate, as it sometimes does, stepped in, and Ann, Lincoln's first love, died August 25, 1835.

Poor Lincoln, the death of Ann Rutledge was his first real great sorrow. For a time it affected his mind; he became melancholy, and his friends kept a close watch over him. He said to me one day, as we were sitting in his office in the White House during the war, "Cummings, my heart is buried with Ann." He told me he really and truly loved that girl and continued, "I think often of her now," then stopped, and a smile came over that careworn face as he sighed, "I have loved the name of Rutledge to this day."

Did he tell me about building a flatboat and going to New Orleans?

I have heard him tell many a time how he and John Seamon and Walter Carman constructed a large flatboat way back in 1831 for a fellow by the name of Denton Offutt, who ran a store where Lincoln was clerk. They loaded it with barrels of pork, corn

and other things and rafted it down the Sangamon River to where that met the Illinois River, then down the Illinois River to the Mississippi and from there to New Orleans.

When Lincoln was strolling about New Orleans he must have seen much of slavery, for the city was full of it. Here, for the first time, he really saw and felt its evils. Abe told me how he and his two companions once passed a slave auction where they were selling a pretty, young negro girl and how he could not stand it and said, "Boys, let's away from this—if I ever get a chance to hit that thing—slavery—I'll hit it hard!" and by jimminy—Old Abe certainly did it in '61, when the cruel war first began.

Did I know Mary Todd who afterwards became Mrs. Lincoln?

Yes, I knew her very well. She came, if I remember rightly, to visit her sister in Springfield about 1839. Her father and mother lived somewhere in Kentucky. Mary was then about 25 years old, a very pretty girl with dark brown hair and snappy bluish-gray eyes. She was smart and attractive, I tell you. All the young fellows like Stephen Douglas started to court her, but she had set her cap for Lincoln, for she was an ambitious girl and had faith that Abe would go far. Lincoln was charmed with her wit and beauty. They became engaged sometime in 1840 and agreed to be married on the first of January 1841.

But a funny thing happened on the day

set for the wedding. The house was all decorated, the supper prepared, the guests all there and ready to watch the ceremony. Mary was in her wedding dress and veil, and I can see her now as she sat there, nervously waiting for the groom. Lincoln was late. An hour passed—the bride became frantic. All of the guests became mighty restless. Where in the world was Abe? After another hour some of us went out to find him. But nobody did, and so the guests went home. Mary in hysterics went to her room. I often wondered what her feelings were, for she was sensitive and proud.

Along about daybreak some of us found Lincoln, restless, gloomy, miserable, a real object of pity. Abe simply could not, when it came right down to it, show up at the wedding. I had my own idea—I think the memory Lincoln carried with him of Ann Rutledge had something to do with it.

Mary and Abe met a long time afterwards at the home of Simeon Francis, who was the editor of the Journal. They patched things up and were quietly married on Friday, November 4, 1842.

You want to know when folks started calling him "Honest Abe"? Well, it was before he came to Springfield, where I first met him, and when he was still a clerk in Offutt's store back in New Salem—you remember Offutt was the man Lincoln was working for the time he built the flatboat and went to New Orleans. Well, one night a woman came into the store to buy some

tea, and after she had gone, Abe discovered she had paid him a sixpence too much. So what did Abe do after he had locked the store? He would not wait until morning, but just started off in the rain down the muddy road to the widow's house, which was a mile or so away. He didn't think anything about it. It wasn't his money, so he wanted to return it at once. Abe was that plain honest with everybody. No wonder he was called "Honest Abe."

Did I ever hear any of the Lincoln-Douglas debates? Never missed but one. Why everybody from miles around would go to those famous debates. Some came on horseback, others in buggies, and some would get up before daybreak to yoke up the oxen and drive in from way out on the prairie. Whenever Lincoln and Douglas held a debate, everyone just naturally took a holiday. Whole families came, children, dogs and all—they brought their food in big baskets and made a day of it. You see there were no big halls in those days, and the debates were generally held in the woods at the edge of the town. I tell you in those days everybody wanted to have a hand in running our government and to learn all there was to know about the important questions of the day. I often wonder how much better a government we would have now if father, mother and everybody else took the same deep interest in things as we did back in 1854 to 1865.

Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois

was called "The Little Giant," and it seemed as if fate had decreed that he and Lincoln should always be rivals. Even when Abe was courting Mary Todd, Douglas tried to cut him out. They ran against each other for State Senator in 1858, and Douglas was elected. Lincoln naturally was disappointed, but he said he was used to disappointments and could perhaps stand it better than Douglas. He felt like the big boy who stubbed his toe: it hurt too bad to laugh, and he was too big to cry.

Lincoln while debating, never lost his temper—he always left that to the other fellow. I remember well when Douglas went after Lincoln in his speech at Galesburg, Illinois. Douglas was a small, pompous man, and had a great respect for his own importance, while Lincoln was a tall, modest man, and took things easy like. You know in those days both candidates always spoke from the same platform, so whatever they had to say about each other was said face to face. I wonder if it would not be a good system to follow today instead of talking over the radio. I always like to size up the candidates myself.

Well, as I was telling you, Douglas went right after Lincoln, and the harder he would hit, the more calmly Old Abe would sit there and smile. When he got unusually sarcastic, Lincoln always gave a hearty laugh. I tell you Lincoln was a wise man. He always let the other fellow get as mad as he wanted to. Douglas closed his speech

that day with an insulting and bitter attack on Lincoln, telling how he had tried everything and had always been a failure. He had tried farming and had failed at that; had tried flatboating and had failed at that; had tried store keeping and had failed at that; had tried school teaching and had failed at that; had tried law and had failed at that; and now, after failing at everything else, he has gone into politics. The Judge allowed that at politics he would make the worst failure of all.

I tell you, we that were Lincoln's friends were aroused to anger at the Judge, but Old Abe sat and laughed during Douglas's tongue-lashing, and we all wondered what he would say. He stood up and turned to the Judge, who sat there, with a self-satisfied expression on his face as if to say, "There now, I settled that fellow."

Lincoln admitted that everything Judge Douglas had said was true. Then Abe politely thanked him for doing what his modesty would forbid him to do himself,—for giving such a complete history of his life. "It was true, every word of it. I have done all these things. I worked on a farm, I split rails. I have worked on a flatboat, and I have tried to practice law. But there is just one thing my good friend forgot to mention in my line of accomplishments. Douglas says I sold liquor over the counter, when *I was keeping store. But he forgot to mention that while I was on one side of the counter, he himself was on the other.*"

Everyone knew Lincoln did not drink.

Well boys, you should have heard the crowd cheer and yell, for everybody knew the Judge well—knew his infirmity for liquor—and it set the whole audience wild. It was a long time before Lincoln could get them quiet. Abe was a clever politician. He understood people, and when everybody quieted down he delivered one of those masterly orations that made him famous. Years afterwards, people said they remembered that Douglas had spoken, but they would always remember what Lincoln had said. As long as Lincoln is remembered, Douglas will not be forgotten.

In my mind, the trouble with Douglas was, that he was more a debater than an orator for he made no appeal to the heart. Lincoln knew and understood us common everyday people, for he was one of us. He talked to us that came from the farms, workshops and villages with plain words and homely phrases in a way we could understand. When Lincoln was finally elected President, Douglas, who was a real man after all though different from Lincoln in his viewpoint, rallied to Lincoln's support. Why I remember just as if it were yesterday we were all on the east portico of the Capitol, when Lincoln took the oath of office. He was looking around for a place to lay that high hat of his, when the Judge stepped up and took it and held it while his old rival on many a platform was sworn in as President.

Lincoln's political ideas, as you will see when you start reading and studying his speeches and debates in your history lessons, were explained in a straightforward, simple way. The most noted ones he delivered at Peoria, Illinois, in October, 1854, at Springfield, Illinois, his own town, in June, 1858, and one at Freeport, Illinois, August, 1858. Of course, his most famous speech, and the one that did more to bring people's attention to him as a Presidential candidate than any other single speech—even those of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates—was the one he delivered at Cooper Union in New York on the 27th of February, 1860.

To be sure, Abe did a lot of talking wherever he went, but to my mind, as I look back now, those four speeches gave everybody something to think about. They showed just where he stood; and in them he seemed to say what everybody thought but only Old Abe knew how to express.

Well, I'll tell you. About once a week we used to talk things over. I always had a great respect for his opinion on any question. He was a great reader, took all the leading papers that were published, North and South. He was always a fair-minded man and wanted to get both sides of a question. He had a habit of putting those long legs of his on the porch railing and thinking over both sides of a discussion. You never could get Abe to express his opinion on anything until he had considered all the facts on both sides and had done a heap of

thinking; and when he did talk, what he said was worth listening to and remembering. Lots of people I know are not like Lincoln.

I remember once we were talking about public opinion, and Lincoln said, "Our very Government rests on public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion can change the Government. But public opinion on any subject in our political life always has a 'central idea.' At the beginning of our Government it was 'the equality of men.' The one great living principle of all democratic governments is that the representatives are bound to carry out the wishes of their constituents. The people are the real masters of those who serve."

I remember another great thing that Lincoln said years later when he made his second inaugural address. The nation was at war, and feeling ran deep. Many spiteful sayings were being directed against those of the Southland, but never did I know Lincoln to say or write anything harsh against those who took up the sword against the Union. Lincoln knew what the people thought, and the papers were full of it. He often spoke against this feeling, and I guess that was on his mind when he paused in his reading of the address and looked over the sea of faces and said in that tired, patient voice of his:

"With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to

finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphans—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Abraham Lincoln never cherished bitter thoughts toward people, whether they agreed with him or not. You see I knew Lincoln well, from the time he came into my store way back in 1837 until the day he was shot in Ford's Theater in Washington on that fateful day, April 15, 1865, a full 28 years.

I was with Lincoln the day in May, 1860, when he received the telegram from Chicago telling him he was nominated by the Republican Convention. We were all together at the office of a Mr. Conklin, who was a lawyer and had his office over Chatterton's jewelry store. I remember it well. There was Old Abe over by the front window, stretched out on a settee—his head resting on a cushion at one end and his feet out over the other end, the most unconcerned man in the room. I tell you we were all excited as the telegrams were coming in from Chicago telling about the balloting.

After discussing the situation with us for awhile, Lincoln arose and said: “Well, Cummings, I believe I will go back to my office and practice law.” And would you believe it, back he went just as if the convention were not worrying him!

Finally came the message from Chicago signed by the name of J. J. S. Wilson:

"Vote just announced, whole No. 466, necessary to choice 234—Lincoln 354, the nomination was made unanimous amid tense enthusiasm."

Lincoln read the telegram. I tell you we were excited. Some of us started running out into the street, shouting "Lincoln elected!" "Lincoln elected!" Old Abe just read the telegram, put it in his pocket, turned to us and said, with a smile on his face, "I guess there's a little lady down at our house who will be glad to know this." And home he went putting on that old high hat that he always kept his papers in when he was in court.

Did I ever hear Lincoln tell jokes? Yes, many of them. I hear a lot they say he told, and some are not true. I just thought of a joke Mr. Lincoln tried on Mrs. Lincoln. You know that Lincoln was careless about his dress, sometimes almost to the point of being shiftless; I guess his mind was always on something else. The neighbors all joked him because his fences needed repairing and his yard cleaning up.

Well, one day he came back from a trip of several days with a friend of ours by the name of Richardson. When they drove up to the house, Lincoln noticed a great and surprising change. The grass was cut, the fences fixed and painted, and everything looked spic-and-span. It did not look like the same place. Mrs. Lincoln took advantage of Lincoln's absence and had everything fixed up. She was standing at the

door, all excited, to see how her improvements would strike Lincoln.

Well, what do you think Old Abe did? He pulled up his horse but did not get out of the buggy. He sat there looking around, saying nary a word, then, turning to his wife who was standing there, all expectancy, he bowed politely without the slightest show of recognition, and said, "You'll excuse me, my good woman, but can you tell me where Mr. Lincoln lives?" You should have seen Mrs. Lincoln, who couldn't relish a joke. She said, "You get right out of that buggy, and I'll show you personally where Mr. Lincoln lives." I tell you we neighbors got a good laugh out of that.

The night before the Lincoln family left for Washington, from which he never returned alive, I went over for a last farewell chat with Abe. There he was in his shirt sleeves with some hotel cards in his hand on which he had written "Lincoln, Executive Mansion, Washington." He had written them himself and was tacking them on his many trunks, which he had just finished tying up with old rope.

As I looked at those cards, marked "Lincoln, Executive Mansion," I thought of the first time I met Abe when he wanted to be trusted for that bed, veritably—"God moves in a mysterious way," and how little we know the men He has in training for some coming crucial event.

Well, the next morning all Springfield, as it seemed to me, was down at the old

frame station to see the Lincolns off. I remember the day well; when I woke up it was dark, cold and drizzly. A special train stood waiting. At half past seven, Lincoln and his family entered the dilapidated hotel bus, they were staying at the hotel as their house was closed, and drove down to the station.

Everybody crowded around to say good-bye. I guess there must have been a thousand of us there. There were not many breakfasts cooking in town that morning, for Old Abe was going to leave us and nobody knew when he would be back. The time was too short for Lincoln to shake hands and say good-bye, except to a few of us. The engineer, old Bill Baxter, rang the bell and the Lincolns got on board. The rain kept coming down harder and harder and it started getting blacker and blacker but no one left.

Everyone felt sobbish like—some women started weeping and crying. I had to blow my nose and wipe my eyes several times myself. I often wonder as I sit by the fire and think it over—if those people didn't have an idea that our old neighbor might never come back alive. It seemed that a gloomy and depressing spirit was on the face of the whole company. I tell you that Lincoln's leaving was a solemn affair.

We were all watching Lincoln. For a moment he disappeared in the car, then came out on the back platform carrying his old high hat, and held up his hands. The crowd

became hushed. All you could hear was the falling rain and occasional chokes and sobs here and there in the crowd. Then in a voice that was choked with emotion, and with tears filling his eyes, he said good-bye to his friends and neighbors.

“My friends, no one not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and to the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington.

“Without the assistance of that Divine Being, who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care I commend you as I hope in your prayers you will commend me. I bid you an affectionate farewell!”

The whistle blew, the bell rang, and the train carrying my old friend moved off slowly in the falling rain.

Not a sound was heard but sobbing and crying as the crowd broke up and started back towards town. There was not much business done in Springfield that day.

— Continued in Vol. 4 —

FIND ACTOR'S STORY OF LINCOLN'S DEATH

*He was on the Stage the Night
Lincoln was Shot.*

*Old Trunk Stored 50 Years
Gives Up Secret.*

AFTER being stored in an old trunk for more than half a century in the home of his descendants, a paper containing a vivid description of the assassination of Lincoln, written by E. A. Emerson, an old-time actor and friend of John Wilkes Booth, has been found in a small brick house in a side street in Alexandria, Va.

Emerson played the role of Lord Dundreary in the cast of "Our American Cousin," in Laura Keane's company at old Ford's Theatre in Tenth Street, the night Lincoln was shot, and witnessed the assassination of the great emancipator. He was the father of Charles O. Emerson of 313 North Royal Street, Alexandria, who found the paper giving Emerson's version of the tragedy, with other heirlooms, including photographs of his father in the role of Lord Dundreary and of John Wilkes Booth in a Scotch role.

Most of the members of the company in which Emerson was playing were arrested,

and he had to report to the police daily until the matter was finally cleared with the capture of Booth and the execution of Mrs. Surratt and the other alleged conspirators. That was the last play in which Emerson ever took part.

The most prized relic found by Emerson in the old trunk is a faded and crumpled program of the cast of "Our American Cousin," with a small blood spot in the upper corner. This program is declared to have been found on the floor to the right of Mr. Lincoln's chair when Mr. Emerson hurried up to the stage box after the shooting. Whether it is the blood of Mr. Lincoln, or that of Major Rathbone, who was in President Lincoln's party the night of the tragedy, and whose son is Henry R. Rathbone, now a member of Congress from Illinois, is not known.

The paper giving the version of Emerson, found in the Alexandria trunk, reads:

Emerson's Story

"I knew John Wilkes Booth well, having played with him in dozens of cities throughout the East and Middle West. He was a kind-hearted, genial person, and no cleverer gentleman ever lived. Everybody loved him on the stage, though he was a little excitable and eccentric.

"The day before President Lincoln was shot I was standing in front of Ford's Theatre when John walked up, evidently in an

agitated state of mind. He grabbed the cane from my hands and said:

"Ned, did you hear what that old scoundrel did the other day?"

"I asked him who he was talking about, and he answered:

"'Why, that old scoundrel, Lincoln. He went into Jeff Davis's house in Richmond, sat down and threw his long legs over the arm of a chair and squirted tobacco juice all over the place. Somebody ought to kill him.'

"I said, 'For God's sake, John, stop where you are! I am going to quit you.'

"With that he pulled my cane down over his shoulders with such force that it broke in four pieces. I still have that cane.

"Of course, I was afraid of becoming involved in any trouble he might get into, and that is the nearest he ever came to saying anything to me about conspiracy.

"It never dawned on me that he had any intention of doing any bodily harm to the President, for had I known it, even though I was his friend I should certainly have done all in my power to prevent it.

Believes Kidnapping Was Intended

"I feel confident that at first his idea was not to kill the President, but to capture him and carry him South to force an exchange of prisoners by holding him as a hostage. Realizing the hopelessness of this, however, I think he then conceived the idea of assassinating him.

"I was standing in front of the theatre on the day of the murder when a messenger from the President rode up and asked for a box for the President's party for the performance that evening.

"Replying that the theatre was at Mr. Lincoln's disposal, Mr. Ford, owner of the theatre, took a pencil and wrote across the box of the stage: 'The President and his party will be at the theatre tonight.'

"A few minutes later Booth walked in and, observing the notice said: 'What, that old scoundrel is going to be here tonight?'

"Mr. Ford said: 'Yes, John; but I would not speak of him in that way if I were you.'

"With that Booth walked rapidly away and disappeared. I do not know where he went, but my idea is that his plan of killing the President and the heads of the Cabinet was formed at that time.

"On Friday night, April 15, 1865 the theatre was crowded and the performance was going along smoothly. Mr. Lincoln's party was late in arriving, and we were in the midst of the second act when they arrived and went up to the box that had been saved for them.

"After some difficulty in quieting the audience, the President seated himself and requested me—I was on the stage at the time—to go on with the play.

When the Shot Rang Out

"After the scene was over, it being the first night that I had played my part, I

stood near a gas jet on the stage, just under Mr. Lincoln's box, reading over my lines.

"Suddenly a shot rang out, apparently coming from the audience. It startled me, and everything was confusion out in front. I walked out to the center of the stage, and while standing there I was amazed to see Booth, his hair in wild disorder, leap from the upper box.

"He caught his spur in a flag draped under the box and fell heavily, but this did not prevent him from rushing frantically down to the footlights, brandishing a large bowie knife in his hands, and crying 'Sic semper tyrannis!'

"Turning, he rushed directly across the stage to the right and up the side wall to the back of the theatre, where he had a little stable in which he kept his horse and buggy. There was a boy holding the horse in the alley.

"Booth mounted the horse, struck the boy in the chest, and galloped down the alley to F Street and out F, I presume, to the Anacostia Bridge and across the bridge into Maryland.

"In the pandemonium which followed no one seemed to know just what to do, and it was nearly twelve hours later before any pursuit of the assassin was gotten under way.

"In attempting to grapple with Booth as he leaped from the box, Major Rathbone, a member of the President's party, was severely cut on the arm.

Laura Keene Rushes to Box

"Laura Keene, one of the leading members of our company, was one of the first to reach the box, and when I saw her she was holding the President's head in her lap and the handsome yellow satin dress she wore in her part was stained all down the front with his blood.

"After a great deal of hauling around, and tearing off of the President's clothes in search of the fatal wound, he was placed on a shutter and carried from the theatre out into the street.

"As no one seemed to know what to do with him, he was taken into a house across the street and carried into a small hall bedroom and placed on a little cot. There, surrounded by his family and his Cabinet, he died the next morning."

To the student of *Lincolniana* one of the most interesting parts of the Emerson version is his statement that Booth, brandishing a large bowie knife, shouted, "*Sic Semper Tyrannis!*" There has always been controversy over the question whether Booth uttered such a cry.

William J. Ferguson, the famous old-time actor, and who was until recently known to be alive, always declared very positively to his friends that the assassin did not exclaim, "*Sic Semper Tyrannis!*" Ferguson played the role of the Lieutenant Vernon, R. N., in the "*American Cousin*" the night of the tragedy.

I SAW LINCOLN SHOT

*The Story of an April Memory that
Lived for Sixty-nine Years*

By LIEUTENANT JOHN B. RIVARD

as told to

FRANK M. BUTLER

Editor's Note: Mr. Rivard fought through three years of the Civil War. Discharged from the Union army with the rank of lieutenant, he married and stayed in Washington for a honeymoon. On the night of April 14, 1865, he took his bride to Ford's Theater; there she would see Abraham Lincoln. The play was a comedy, *Our American Cousin*. Booth's pistol turned the occasion into tragedy.

On February 27, 1934, not long after telling Mr. Butler this story, Mr. Rivard died in Woodbine, New Jersey. He would have been one hundred on May 24.—Reprint from *Liberty* magazine.

"My memory is not so good as it once was for recent happenings; but I can never forget the assassination of Abraham Lincoln

I was only the width of the stage from him when he was shot. I do not believe that anybody actually saw the shot fired. If they did, why was not the alarm raised sooner? I was in a location to have seen as much of what went on in his box as anybody

except his party and the actors on the stage; but I did not happen to be looking at the moment. Furthermore, an appreciable length of time elapsed between the report of the pistol and the cry, "The President has been shot!"

This cry came from his box, and even there no one noted Booth's presence until the shot rang out. Major Rathbone, who was the first to see Booth, probably did not realize that he had done more than shoot at the President. As Booth leaped from the box, the major merely cried, "Stop him! Stop that man!" and the actors and stage hands were so thunderstruck that they failed to do anything.

No one can say exactly how long it was from the time the shot was fired until Miss Harris of the President's party called out that he had been shot. But between those two happenings Booth had struggled with Major Rathbone and stabbed him in the arm and had leaped to the stage, breaking one leg; he had then regained his feet and hobbled to the footlights to yell, "Sic semper tyrannis! The South is avenged!" and had managed to get away to the stage door and to mount his horse for flight.

Laura Keene, the actress, ran to the footlights and exclaimed, "For God's sake, keep your seats and everything will be all right!" Miss Harris called for stimulants, and Miss Keene inquired what the trouble was. "The President has been shot!" was Miss Harris's answer. Naturally all eyes had been on

Booth, and this was the first, as I believe, that any one outside of the Presidential party knew of what happened.

My bride and I had not gone to the theater merely to see Lincoln, but the fact that he was to be present had made me doubly proud to take her. I had bought seats in the box directly opposite the President's.

The first act was more than half through when he and his party came in. General Grant and his wife were to have accompanied the Lincoln party, but in the afternoon the general had been called out of town. I had always felt that if Grant had been in the President's box that night the dreadful happening would have been avoided, as he was a restlessly active man and would probably have detected Booth's presence in time.

A big easy armchair had been provided for the President. I can see him and his party yet as they sat there. He laughed at the jokes and chatted with the others, and once he rose and put on his overcoat. It was a cold night and the theater was none too warm.

All was gayety and pleasure; nothing gave the slightest warning. Suddenly the shot rang out. Everybody at first, apparently, thought it a part of the play. When Miss Harris cried out what had happened, a woman screamed "Murder!" and then bedlam broke loose. Instantly the audience was changed into a howling, raging mob.

Those too weak to buffet it were knocked down and trampled. We saw that we could do nothing, so we waited in the box until soldiers came in and restored order. Army surgeons in the audience made their way to the Presidential box, and Lincoln was then carried to a house across Tenth Street.

When we reached the street a vast crowd had gathered, and men with ropes and torches were yelling, "Kill the rebels! Burn the theater!" Undoubtedly they would have set fire to it but for drastic action by the Militia. All night long mobs roamed the streets, making such a disturbance that no one could have slept.

As it was, newspapers issued frequent editions throughout the night and everybody stayed up to hear reports of the President's condition. It was only after the announcement of his death, shortly after 7 A. M., that we undertook to get any rest.

We realized that there was nothing else anyone of us could do, as we sorrowfully turned and left his bedside, as that great soul winged his way to his Maker."

OLD DIARY DESCRIBES MURDER OF LINCOLN

*Attending Doctor's Notebook bares Details
of Assassination 68 years ago tonight.*

Philadelphia, April 14.—Sixty-nine years ago tonight Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's Theater, Washington.

Among those in the audience was Dr. Charles Taft, who attended the martyred President until death, and his diary tells anew the story of that fateful night.

The notebook, which recently came into the possession of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, Philadelphia, Bibliophile relates:

"At about 10:30 my attention was directed toward the President's box by the report of a pistol, and I saw a man jump from the stage box, shouting as he did so, 'Sic semper tyrannis!'

"As he struck the stage he partly fell, sinking down until his knees touched the floor—a few moments of great confusion followed——

"I heard several shouts for a surgeon; this was the first intimation I had that anyone had been wounded. I sprang upon the stage, calling out that I was a surgeon, when I was seized by several men and lifted up to the stage box.

“When I entered the President was lying on the floor, surrounded by a number of men who were trying to remove him.”

Dr. Taft recounts in detail how the President was carried across the street to a private residence and how doctors sought to save his life.

“The wound ceased to bleed or discharge at about 5:30 A. M.,” he continues in his diary, “and from that time on the breathing was stertorous, but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 5 seconds after 7; the heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes, 10 seconds past 7.

“My hand was upon the President’s heart and my eye upon the watch of the surgeon general, who was standing by my side.”



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He Knew Lincoln

Captain Cummings Recollections

(PART 2)

VOL. 4



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"He Knew Lincoln." Captain Cummings' Recollection of "Honest Abe," by William Wasson. This quaint, homey tale by this lovable old veteran is enjoyed by everybody. It follows Lincoln through his dramatic career to the night he was shot in Ford's Theatre. Complete in Vol. 3-4.

HE KNEW LINCOLN

Captain Cummings continues his recollections from the time Lincoln came to Springfield until he left Washington as told in Part 1—Vol. 3.

From the time Lincoln became President until his death

Part II

I DID not go with Lincoln to Washington but I heard all about his journey from the time he left Springfield until he arrived in Washington, from my friend Col. Ward Hill Lamon, who accompanied him.

The journey took two weeks. You see, everybody wanted to hear and see Lincoln, so they stopped at many places besides the ones advertised where the train would stop. Old Abe would go out on the back platform and speak to the people, who always came in crowds.

The first stop was Indianapolis, where they stayed all night at the Bates House. The next day, his 52nd birthday, they went to Cincinnati. The weather was fine and there was a great parade, the streets were all decorated. You see, Cincinnati was on the Ohio River and just across was Kentucky. Here the feeling about slavery was divided and a great many people on both sides came over to hear Old Abe.

From Cincinnati he went to Columbus, spending the night at the home of the Governor, and spoke to the General Assembly. The house was packed to the doors. He next went to Pittsburgh and Cleveland. He then spoke in Buffalo. Col. Lamon sent me a copy of the *New York Herald* of Sunday, February 17, 1861, telling me about it. I clipped the article and pasted it in my scrap-book. Here it is:

“At the North East Station a flag inscribed, ‘Fort Sumter’ was carried right up to where Mr. Lincoln stood, but he did not seem to take the hint, and made no allusion to it in his few remarks. Mr. Lincoln said that during the campaign he had received a letter from a young girl of Buffalo, suggesting that he let his whiskers grow, as she knew it would improve his looks; and he laughingly said he was in favor of anything that would help him out, and if his fair correspondent was among the crowd he would be glad to welcome her. In response, a little lassie made her way through the crowd and was helped to the platform and kissed by the President, amid the shouts of the crowd.”

Well boys, you know now, how Old Abe came to wear his whiskers.

The next stop was at Albany, N. Y., the Capital, and he was here greeted by Governor Morgan and the prominent officials who had come to see and hear him from all over the State.

The day Lincoln was at Albany which

was February 18th, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated President of the Confederate States of America at Montgomery, Alabama. From Albany he went to New York and then to Trenton, New Jersey, to address the State Legislature.

When Lincoln was in Philadelphia he visited Independence Hall, and raised a flag over the building where the Declaration of Independence was signed. Here at Philadelphia he first heard of a plot to assassinate him on his way to Washington.

Old Abe referred to this plot in his speech at Philadelphia:

"I never had a feeling politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence originated and given to the world from this hall. A sentiment in the Declaration which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world, for all future time."

"If this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say, I would rather be assassinated on the spot, than to surrender it."

"I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by."

A funny thing happened to Old Abe on that trip that might have been very serious. Before he left Springfield he had written and had printed his inaugural address and had

all the copies in a satchel which he discovered he had lost.

A hurried search was immediately made. A satchel that they thought was Lincoln's was found, but when it was opened all they found was a soiled shirt and a bottle of whisky. Lincoln's bag was finally found and he laughingly said, "My moral reputation is finally restored."

When Lincoln left Philadelphia for Harrisburg he received what he and those responsible for his safe arrival in Washington, Col. Lamon and Allan Pinkerton, the famous detective, felt was accurate news of an attempt to assassinate him as he passed through Baltimore. So he left the special train secretly and with those two men took another train, and arrived safely in Washington the next morning. He went directly to the old Willard Hotel where his family, later in the day, joined him.

I was so interested in Old Abe and what was going on, I just had to go to Washington and hear his inaugural address. When I arrived at the capital, I went at once to the Willard Hotel. My! Abe and I were glad to see each other. We had lots to talk over. I told him all the home news and he told me about his trip to Washington. Abe urged me to find a place and stay in Washington for some time, for, he said, "Cumings, maybe I will want you to do something important for me a little later on."

I could stay just as well as not, but little

did I think I would never see Springfield again until I went back on the funeral train that bore all that remained of my old friend to his final resting place.

The day after I arrived, Lincoln was inaugurated President. Washington was filled with people from everywhere. Every bed, in all the hotels and boarding houses, was taken. The city was decorated, flags flying, bands playing. Old General Scott, who was head of the Army, had his soldiers knee deep on Pennsylvania Avenue, leading up to the Capitol. He was so afraid something would happen to Old Abe, for a lot of stories were going around saying that his life was threatened.

The General even had sharpshooters on the roofs of some of the houses.

About noon, President Buchanan left the White House and drove to the Willard Hotel. I remember he wore an old-fashioned high standing collar about up to his ears and a big white cravat, as they called a necktie in those days, and a black broadcloth, swallow-tailed coat. It did not fit him very well. Funny, how you remember little things at a time like that. In a few minutes, out came Old Abe, arm in arm with Buchanan, and off they drove, to head the procession.

The Capitol was a long way from being completed, in fact, they were working on it practically every day during the war. They had built a large wooden platform, with benches over the steps of the east side of the

Capitol. Fortunately Abe was used to talking to crowds out of doors, and his clear, thin, high voice could be heard a long distance. You know, in those days there were no contrivances to carry sounds, as there are today.

Lincoln was ready to read his inaugural address, having taken the oath of office from Chief Justice Taney of the Supreme Court, when he looked around for a place to lay his hat.

You remember I told you how Judge Douglas was on the platform and seeing Lincoln's predicament, stepped forward and took his hat and held it while his old-time rival delivered his speech. It was an act of courtesy that everybody noticed and favorably commented upon. I could not help thinking, as I sat there looking at the crowds and listening to Old Abe, was it possible that this was the same fellow who had come into my store years ago and wanted to be trusted for \$17.00 for the fixings for his bed?

I tell you, the whole country was anxiously waiting to know where Lincoln stood and what his ideas were on many questions, like Secession, Slavery and lots of other things. Old Abe did not leave them in doubt as to just where the new President stood. They all knew when he finished. He used the same simple words he always used and said just what he meant, so that everyone could understand. As one newspaper said, "He used the language of common sense and words that exactly fitted the facts."

I kept a copy of his speech in my scrap-book. Lincoln said:

"I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it now exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so."

"I hold in contemplation of universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of the states is perpetual. I therefore consider that in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken, and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the states."

"The power confided to me will be used to hold, and occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government. We cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other and, my Countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time, before you, in hot haste, take a step which you would never take deliberately."

It seemed as if Old Abe had hardly gotten a place to hang his hat, before his troubles started. You see, hostilities had really begun before Lincoln was inaugurated.

Most of the Southern forts and arsenals

had been surrendered and there were about 2,000 cannons stored at Norfolk, Virginia, which fell into the hands of the Confederates, and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry had taken place. Some day I would like to tell you the story of old John Brown, how he and a few radical abolitionists started a conspiracy to capture the United States' arsenal at Harper's Ferry, with its store of arms and ammunition, and how the Government sent down a young officer with some soldiers to capture John Brown and his band. This was Captain Robert E. Lee who became the famous and much loved General of the Southern Army.

Then came the firing of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Two days after the fall of Fort Sumter, the President issued his call for 75,000 volunteers, to serve for only three months. You see nobody, not even Lincoln, thought the war would last as long as it did. I have often thought what a blessing it was that no one dreamed that there were four terrible, bloody years ahead for the whole country.

The response to Lincoln's call was immediate. There were thousands of men who left their business, law offices, shops and farms. It seemed that every able-bodied man wanted to help Old Abe put down the rebellion. There were far more men volunteered than were called for. I tell you the feeling ran high. The excitement all over the North, when they fired on Fort Sumter, was intense. There was no dicker as to

what we should do then to settle the question.

There was a song that was sung a great deal during the war, that tells how everybody was back of Old Abe. It goes something like this:

“We are coming Father Abraham, three
hundred thousand more,

From Mississippi’s winding stream and
from New England’s shore

We leave our plough and workshops,
our wives and children dear

With hearts too full for utterance, with
but a single tear.”

I think it was about the 19th of April that the President declared a general blockade of all Southern ports, so no ships could leave or enter. That was the first step he took to stop goods reaching or leaving the South.

The same day the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment passed through Baltimore on its way to Washington. The mayor and the police did everything they could to keep the mobs from attacking the soldiers, but in spite of their efforts they were stoned and fired upon. Four soldiers were killed and many wounded. There was nothing left for the soldiers to do but defend themselves and they had to fire in self-defense and many of the mob were killed.

It is a peculiar thing that the first bloodshed between the North and South was on the same date, April 19th, that the opening

gun of the war of the Revolution was fired at the Battle of Lexington.

Things came thick and fast. Lincoln had his hands full. On July 21st, 1861, the first important battle of the war—Bull Run—was fought about 30 miles from Washington. Well, I guess we had to admit the Johnnies licked us good and proper. It ended in a panic-stricken race for our soldiers to get back safely to the other side of the Potomac River.

Why in the world the Confederates did not follow up their advantage, was one too many for me. I guess the Confederate Army was more broken up by victory than we were by defeat.

I was wondering all the time what it was that my friend Lincoln wanted me to stay in Washington for, when a day or two after the Battle of Bull Run, I received a note asking me to have lunch with him.

He told me he needed a friend who could do some confidential errands, and he asked me if I would help him. You may be sure I told him yes. You see we had known each other so well for so many years, through thick and thin, we knew we could trust each other.

I was living with a lady on "K" Street, whose husband was a Captain in General McClellan's Army. I lived there as long as the war lasted and every morning when I was not carrying a message or orders to some officer in the Army, or delivering other

private messages for Old Abe, I reported at the White House. So you see, I had a good chance to know lots of important people and what was going on, not only in Washington but at the headquarters of the different armies.

I tell you I had an interesting and exciting time and many a time I came near to getting caught and shot.

I remember one time very well. I'll tell you boys about it. General McClellan or "Little Phil" as his soldiers called him, was in command of the Army of the Potomac. After defeating General Lee at Antietam in September of 1862, he failed to follow up his victory; complaining as he always did that if he only had more men, or more cannons, or more something else, or that his men were not organized, or they needed rest—he'd lick 'em—and would not stop until he got to Richmond, the rebel capital, he used to say.

The President was patience itself with McClellan. The papers were criticizing and the people were writing Lincoln to let him go and get someone who wanted to fight and was not eternally offering excuses and asking for something different or blaming someone else.

Lincoln sent for me one day and told me he was through writing letters and was going to talk it over with McClellan, and I was to start a few days ahead and talk, casually like, with the soldiers and the officers at

McClellan's Headquarters, but to say nothing to the General. Old Abe wanted to see how the land lay, before he got there—same Old Abe—he wanted all the facts before he did anything.

So off I started. I got pretty near to where our Army was stationed and as it was getting along towards night and raining, I stayed at a farm house.

Well, about two o'clock in the morning when everybody was asleep I awakened with a start, and peeking out of the window I saw a lot of shadowy forms moving quietly around. My eyes got used to the darkness and I made out they were a number of horsemen. I raised the window very carefully and I could hear them quietly talking. I knew by their Southern drawl that they were a squad of enemy pickets, who in some way had found out that I was there. I have often wondered if the farmer was a Johnnie and had gotten word to them.

I was in a fix, for I carried in a belt, under my clothes, important and secret letters from Lincoln. I made up my mind that I simply must get out of there at once.

So, tying my boots about my neck I opened the window, let myself down to the roof of a lean-to and slid to the ground. I went to the barn and led my horse out the side of the barn, away from the house, mounted and started off. The night was black—there was no moon.

I must have made some noise in getting

the horse out of the barn, for before I knew it, the whole kit and caboodle of them were after me, yelling and shooting.

I ran that horse until he nearly dropped, and finally lost them and spent the night and the next day hiding in an old shed in the woods. I tell you I was scared.

But as the war went on, and I had to go everywhere, I got used to it.

After the Battle of Chancellorsville, which was along about May 31, I was in Richmond, Virginia, getting information for the President as to the strength of the Southern Army and what their fortifications were in their capital.

It was in that battle that one of the bravest and finest Christian gentlemen, General Stonewall Jackson, was accidentally shot, in the dark, by one of his own soldiers. The news reached Richmond one beautiful Sunday morning that Jackson was dead. General Lee said, "I feel as if I had lost my right arm," and I guess Lee was right.

The next day all of the church bells, which had not been melted to make cannons, were tolling. The hearse bearing his coffin, wrapped in a Confederate flag, and covered with flowers, and the band, playing a dirge, passed through the streets, lined with soldiers and townsfolk, to the Governor's house.

I stood on the sidewalk, Union man as I was, and a member of the Secret Service, and removed my hat as the procession went

by, and paid my respects to a brave man and a great general. His death was a great loss to the South.

Many times when there had been a battle, I would go at night with Lincoln to the Telegraph office. where he probably spent more of his waking hours than in any other place, except the White House. Here he would talk things over with David Homer Bates who was in charge of the telegraph office.

If the weather was cool or the air chilly, he always wore a gray shawl, thrown over his shoulders in a careless fashion. One thing he could never get used to and never liked, was a squad of soldiers that guarded him wherever he went, but Secretary of War Stanton's orders to the guard were strict, and Abe had to put up with it.

I started one time to keep an account of the number of telegrams he sent to the various officers, ordering them not to shoot some poor fellow who had been court-martialed for falling asleep at his post, or for some other reason, but I lost track of them, there were so many.

Old Abe used to say as he left the telegraph office, walking home through the dark, "There, Cummings, I can go to bed and sleep better; I saved a mother's boy tonight and I guess the Army isn't busted up yet." I tell you, he had a kind heart for everybody.

Bates told me one day how the Emancipa-

tion Proclamation, freeing the slaves, came to be written. Lincoln would drop into the telegraph office each morning and ask for the "latest news from Grant."

Then he would sit down at the desk, take out the incomplete draft of the Proclamation and begin working on it. Bates said he didn't write much at a time. He'd sit there lost in thought for a long time and then he'd carefully write. That went on day after day. He did not make many erasures and cross off and rewrite. Seemed to think out just what he wanted to say—then write it—adding a new paragraph every day or two, until it was all finished.

Bates said that when it was finally published, it was exactly word for word, as Lincoln first wrote it. As I've said before, Lincoln never said anything of importance, or wrote anything, until he had given it a lot of thought. He read the Proclamation to his Cabinet on September 22, 1862 and it went into effect January 1, 1863.

You boys, like everyone else, have read Lincoln's Gettysburg address. I wonder if you know that Lincoln was invited, with other distinguished people, to the dedication of the battleground as a national cemetery; but a great orator of that time, Edward Everett, was to deliver the address. The date originally set, October 23, 1863, did not allow Everett time enough to prepare his speech so it was postponed until November 19th.

Lincoln and the members of his cabinet, Seward, Usher and Blair, several foreign officials and other public men left Washington over the B. & O., in four coaches. We reached Gettysburg at dusk. Lincoln went immediately to the home of a man by the name of Willis. I went, with the rest of the party, to the hotel.

There was a procession next morning to the cemetery where the exercises were to be held. The town was crowded. The papers said there were about 100,000 persons crowded about the speakers' stand.

It took Everett about two hours to deliver his speech. People said it was a wonderful talk, but they could not remember what he had said. What Lincoln said in a few minutes will never be forgotten.

The crowd started calling for Lincoln. He arose, a simple, crude-looking man, his care-worn face now lighted and glowing with intense feeling. He appeared to be unconscious of himself and absolutely absorbed in recollections of the battlefield and its heroic dead. After carefully wiping and adjusting his glasses he started reading in a low voice, that now immortal speech:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived

and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far beyond our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Before any of us knew it, Lincoln stopped, took off his glasses and sat down. Everybody was surprised. We expected he would make a long speech.

Before the first sentence was completed, a hush had come over the crowd and when Lincoln paused and in a quiet tone, looking over the sea of faces said: "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." Everyone of us felt, he was not only honoring the dead on every battlefield but charging us now living, never to forget their supreme sacrifice.

On our return trip to Washington, Lincoln was very quiet and did not join in the general conversation about the events of the day. Turning to a few of us who were sitting near him he said, "That speech fell on the audience like a wet blanket. I ought to have prepared it with much more care."

He himself failed to appreciate the sublime sentiment of the few words he had hastily scribbled that morning with a lead pencil on a pad in the railway carriage. Time has proved them equal to the sayings of any man.

There were so many happenings in those exciting days, I hardly know which one to talk about, but you have asked me if I ever met General U. S. Grant. Well I'll tell you about that, for that day will always stand out in my mind. It was at the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, Virginia, April 9, 1865.

You see Grant had been besieging the Southern Army at Petersburg, Va., for a long time and finally captured the city after the Army of Northern Virginia, as it was known under Lee, had retreated.

I always take off my hat to Lee and his soldiers. For months they had been living on scanty rations. Their clothes were in tatters, many had no shoes at all, their ammunition was nearly gone; they had been fighting for months against great odds. Grant never let up a minute; he kept pounding away at them. Their losses were many and Lee had no more man power to draw on. They were just about at the end of their resources. But their spirit was immense. I tell you the South should always be proud of Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia.

Well, the Johnnies, as we called those Southern fellows, retreated to Appomattox Court House, which was not far from Petersburg, determined to make a final last stand, but Grant and his Army were just too much for them.

I was told to catch up with Grant and give him some orders and letters that Old Abe wanted him to have. Lincoln felt that the end was coming and I guess he wanted Grant to be easy with them about the terms of surrender.

I was at Grant's Headquarters, when an officer bearing a white flag of truce, was sent to Grant about 11 o'clock in the morning and then Lee and Grant met about midway between the lines and stood and talked in the shade of an old tree, with the soldiers of both sides anxiously looking on.

A little later they went into a farm house

owned by a man by the name of McLean. After talking quietly, Grant took a paper from his pocket and read it to Lee, who sat there all dressed up, spick-and-span in a brand-new uniform. I tell you Lee was a fine looking gentleman.

Lee, after studying the terms of surrender that Grant had prepared, took off his glasses and sat there several minutes in deep thought. Not one of us in the room made a sound. We all realized the tragic importance to the nation, of Lee's decision.

Grant noticed Lee looking him over, and apologizing for his appearance said he did not have time to "tidy up a bit." You see Grant had been riding out in the dusty roads inspecting our lines, when he received Lee's message requesting a meeting.

Lee took up the papers and read them again. They were seated, Grant on one side and Lee on the other of a small marble-topped table with pen and ink between them. Finally, Lee, without saying a word, reached for the pen and signed the papers.

As soon as General Lee had signed the papers about the surrender he stood up saying,

"General, our cavalrymen furnished their own horses; and those men will need them to plow their ground and plant corn."

Grant told him the Government did not need the horses and the men should take them home with them.

"That will have a very happy effect," Lee replied. "By the way, General Grant, our Army is in a very bad condition for want of food, shoes, clothes and forage for the horses. Can you help us out by sending some over?"

"Will 25,000 rations and other things help you out?"

"Plenty, plenty, that will be more than abundance," Lee replied.

After Lee had offered General Grant his sword as a sign of surrender, which Grant with a wave of his hand refused to accept, we all shook hands and said good-bye and each side returned to their headquarters.

That day stands out in my life as a red-letter day. When I saw those quiet, courageous men, having known each other in happier days, each with a great respect for the other's ability, quietly discussing the terms of surrender that brought to a close four terrible bloody, war-torn years, I said to myself, "There are two really great Americans."

General Meade met Lee as he was riding off. Lee who used to know Meade, did not recognize him. Meade said, "Don't you remember me General Lee, I'm George Meade." Lee replied, "No, I did not know you, Meade," and, glancing at his gray hair and beard, "How did you happen to get all those gray hairs?" to which Meade replied, "I'm afraid you're the cause of most of them." They laughed and rode off.

The war was over. Back in Washington, bands were playing, bells were ringing, cannons booming, flags flying, people were marching and hurrahing. Nobody paid any attention to business. Every man who could make a speech, was holding forth. Secretary of War Stanton immediately suspended the draft and stopped purchasing military supplies. I tell you it was a happy day for everybody. Crowds were singing,

“When Johnnie Comes Marching Home Again, Hurrah, Hurrah.”

I was up at the White House bright and early the next morning. Everybody was excited. Robert, Old Abe's eldest boy, who was an officer in Grant's Army, had come back with me from Appomattox the day before, and we were a happy crowd at the breakfast table. Old Abe was in the best of humor and told lots of jokes and funny stories. I remember one, for I knew the fellow well when Lincoln and I both lived in Springfield.

A New York firm wrote to Abe some years before he became President for information as to the financial standing of one of his neighbors. Abe said he answered the letter about like this:

“I am well acquainted with Mr.—, and his circumstances. First of all he has a wife and baby, together they ought to be worth \$50,000 to any man. Secondly, he has an office in which there is a table worth \$1.50 and three chairs worth, say \$1.00. Last of

all, there is in one corner a large rat hole, which will bear looking into."

We got a good laugh out of Lincoln's stories. They always helped out when things got tense like, and many times I heard Old Abe answer a question with a story that always seemed to give the answer to the question.

In the afternoon the streets and sidewalks were jammed with soldiers and townspeople and the trains were bringing in hundreds every hour. When the President and Mrs. Lincoln drove down Pennsylvania Avenue, the crowd yelled and cheered themselves hoarse.

Lincoln's face for the first time in years seemed to light up with downright patriotic joy which he did not attempt to conceal. He looked so different, happy like. The crowd went wild when they saw Lincoln. They wanted to unhitch the horses and draw the carriage themselves.

As I stood on the steps of the Willard Hotel, and saw him drive by, I wondered if he was thinking the same thing that I was; of the many, many times I had seen him mounted on an old gray horse, saddlebags containing his few law books across his horse's back, plodding down a deep muddy road, in a pouring rain, off on a lonesome ride of several hours, to attend court away off somewhere.

When I start thinking of that eventful day, April 14, 1865, I often turn to my old

scrapbook and read a piece that Henry Waterson who was editor of the Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier-Journal* wrote:

“Born as lowly as the Son of God, in a hovel; reared in penury, squalor, with no gleam of light or fair surroundings; without graces, actual or acquired; without name or fame or official training; it was reserved for this strange being, late in life, to be snatched from obscurity, raised to supreme command at a supreme moment, and intrusted with the destiny of a nation.”

Now comes that part of my story that I never like to talk much about. It brings too many sad memories—that night at Ford’s Theater.

The play, “Our American Cousin,” with Laura Keane and her company was at Ford’s Theater. As Old Abe always enjoyed seeing a good play, he often went.

The management had announced in the papers that the President and his party would attend that night’s performance, so the place was packed to the doors with a happy and admiring crowd of citizens, neighbors and friends. Everybody was in good spirits, bent on enjoying themselves and celebrating the end of the war.

When the President and his party entered the box, the music struck up—everybody stood up, clapping their hands and cheering, the women waving their handkerchiefs. Old Abe stood up and waved his hands to the

audience. It took several minutes for the crowd to quiet down. The curtain went up—the lights were dimmed and the audience settled back to enjoy the play.

I could see Lincoln very plainly from where I sat. He was sitting in a rocking chair. He must have felt a draft because he got up and taking his old gray shawl from a peg, threw it over his shoulders and leaning forward in his chair so he could see and hear better, settled down to watch the stage.

The next thing, I heard a shot, but did not know where it came from. I saw a man jump from the President's box, catch his foot in some flags they had used to decorate the box with, fall to the stage and rising with a knife in his hands, call out something and dash off the stage through a back door that entered into an alley.

For a moment nobody moved. Then everyone was on his feet, yelling, "The President is shot, catch that man." People started running towards the President's box, many dashed out into the street yelling, "The President is shot. The President is shot." The excitement was intense.

I was only a few seats in the balcony from where the President was and jumping over the seats, reached the box at the same time that a doctor by the name of Charles Taft, who was in the audience, did.

They were stripping the clothes off Old Abe to see where he was shot. Mrs. Lincoln

was in hysterics. Major Rathbone and a Miss Harris both of whom were in the President's party, were trying to quiet her.

Someone called for water. The Doctor was hurrying, trying to find the wound. Laura Keene and her father came up a back way from the stage and entered the box. Rushing up to Lincoln who lay back in his chair unconscious but still breathing, she raised his head in her arms and found the blood trickling down her dress. Then we knew he had been cowardly shot from the back by the assassin, who had quietly opened the box door when the house was dark.

They got a barn door from somewhere and we carried him down the stairs and into a house across the street and laid him on a bed in a small room at the end of the hall.

Awe-stricken and unable to do anything we stood by his bed; Stanton and other cabinet officers, generals and a few old friends like myself. Mrs. Lincoln and Robert were in an adjoining room.

Through the long night the heavy breathing and moaning of poor Lincoln continued and we stood by unable to help. Toward daylight the Doctors shook their heads and we knew there was no hope. At twenty-two minutes past seven o'clock, my dear old friend and companion of many years, found peace.

I left the house and slowly wended my way home. It seemed as if the world had come to an end for me. I could not believe

that I would never again see Abraham Lincoln—that great, simple, kind friend whom I had known and loved for so many years.

Well boys, my story of Honest Abe has been a long one. I hope I have answered your question, “Did I know Lincoln” and helped you too, to always love and cherish his name.

End.

LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

At the commencement of the war, the President had been repeatedly and strongly urged to liberate the slaves. He declared the paramount object is to save the Nation and not either to save or destroy slavery. On New Year's day 1863 the President issued a preliminary proclamation which provided that any state that choose to return to the Union, its slaves were not to be set at liberty by the final proclamation.

"And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin the people so declared to be free, to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense, and I recommend to them that in all cases, when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my name, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

(L. S.)

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:

William W. Seward,
Secretary of State.



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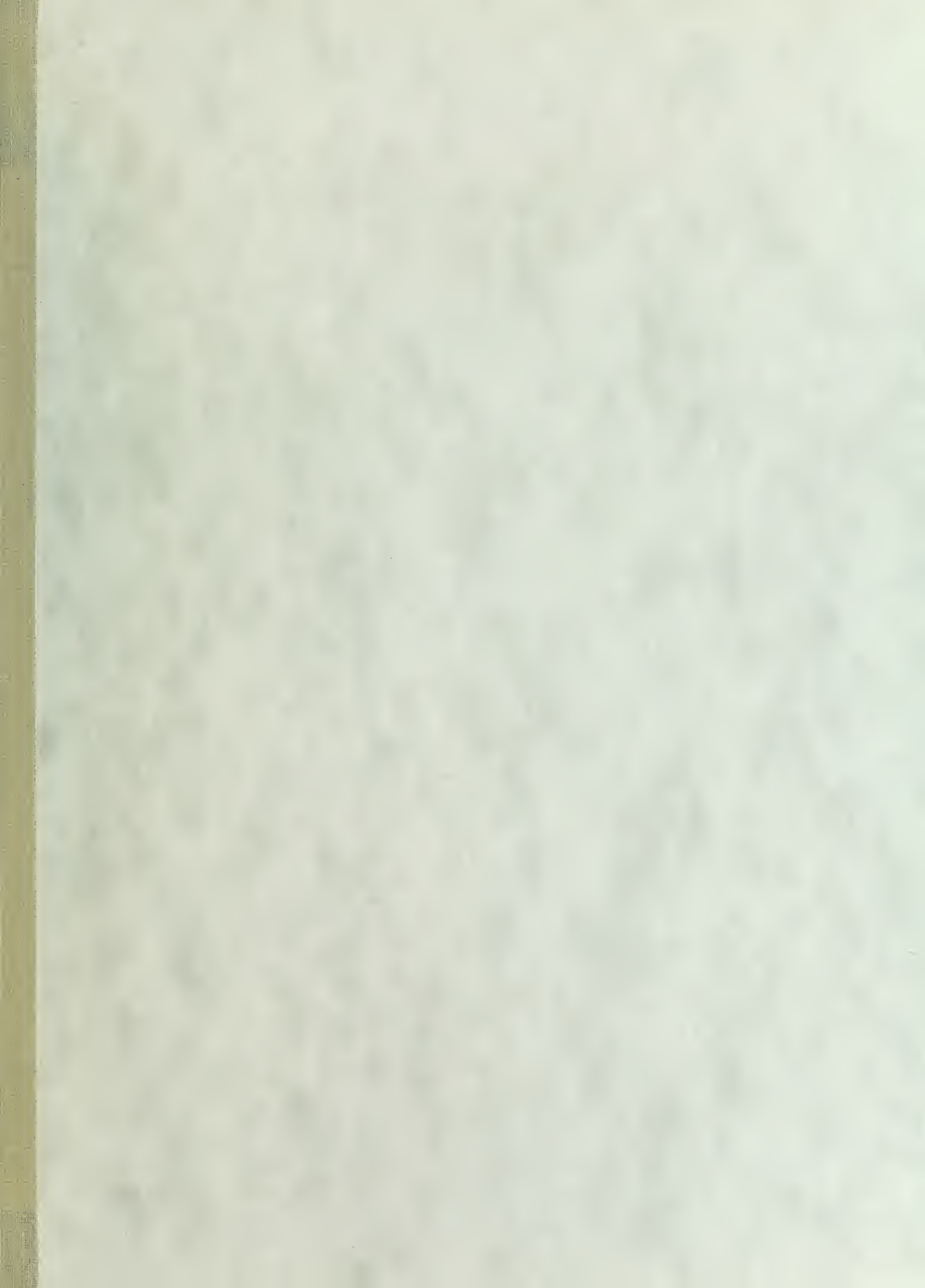
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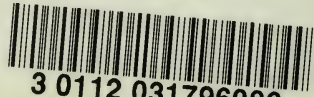
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